

CARING FOR YOUR BREASTS

Arizona Department of Corrections
Health Service Bureau

Inmate Wellness Program
HEP 1019-01/06

There are certain risk factors that make women more likely to get breast cancer. Some of them can be controlled and others can not. Risk factors that you can control or influence include:

- Overweight (40 percent more than your ideal body weight)
- Smoking
- Exposure to certain toxic chemicals

Avoiding these risk factors may help you prevent breast cancer. **Risk factors that you can not control include:**

- Age
- Close relative with breast cancer (especially mother, sister, or daughter)
- Having first child after 35
- Never bearing children

If you fall into any of these categories, early detection will help improve the chances of surviving breast cancer.

Detection and Screening

Early detection of breast cancer is a lifesaving skill which is well worth the few minutes it takes to perform. Every woman can perform a breast self-exam to help find lumps that may be cancerous. In addition to breast self-exams, annual health exams by your health care provider are necessary to screen for lumps.

Mammograms will assist in discovering lumps that are too small to be felt.

How To Do A Breast Self-Exam:

1. Perform a monthly breast exam right after your menstrual period.
2. Lay down with a pillow or towel under your back on the side of the breast you are checking.
3. Use the flat part of your fingers and feel up and down from the outer edge of your breast proceeding inward until all parts are covered.
4. Remember, your breast is not round, but is shaped much as your bra is. Don't forget to feel that upper outer triangle of the breast, located by the arm, which has more chance of having a lump than any other portion. As you feel your breast, gently go over the entire nipple area, as well. You do not need to squeeze your nipples; but, if fluid comes out of one or both nipples without squeezing, notify your health care provider.

Notify your health care provider of any lumps. Some women have normally lumpy or "fibrocystic" breasts. These lumps are not dangerous, but may confuse you when you do your exam. Even if you have normally lumpy breasts, it is very important to get to know your own breasts and notify the health care provider of any new or enlarged lumps. ***New lumps, dimples, or a newly inverted nipple all need to be checked by your health care provider.***